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ABSTRACT

This brief guide presents principles and suggestions to help individuals who are deaf-blind enjoy and benefit from participation in recreational activities. Some considerations discussed are to: (1) start with the individual and determine what he or she is interested in, focusing on the selection of safe, age-appropriate activities; (2) research the individual's communication patterns; (3) develop a recreation plan with both short- and long-term objectives; (4) maintain interest through establishing a specific time period for trying out a new activity, selecting the proper time of day to regularly schedule the activity, and modifying the activity when necessary; and (5) identify effective teaching strategies. Effective teaching strategies include orientation of the individual to the playing area, selecting language appropriate to the pupil's functioning level and communicating the key points of the skill by demonstrating, using Braille or feeling and imitation, and using physical guidance to enable and facilitate the individual's choice-making. An annotated list of 9 organizations and 18 print resources for further information concludes the guide. (Contains 10 references.) (CR)

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THE NATIONAL INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND

HELEN KELLER NATIONAL CENTER
PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND TEACHING RESEARCH

DB – LINK **FACT SHEET**

AUGUST 1998 **REVISED**

RECREATION AND LEISURE

By

LAUREN LIEBERMAN

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The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind

Helen Keller National Center
Perkins School for the Blind
Teaching Research

August 1998
Revised

Recreation and Leisure

Lauren Lieberman, Ph.D.

People join recreational groups for many reasons—for fun, exercise, and meeting others. They look forward to Tuesday bowling, Saturday hikes, Sunday book discussions. Best of all, when people take time off from everyday responsibilities, they return to them later, refreshed. In a way, recreation re-CREATES us.

People who are deaf-blind and have cognitive disabilities enjoy recreational activities just as you and I do. To combat the isolation and lack of independence that often result from their disabilities, they NEED them even more than we do.

A challenge exists to help those who are deaf-blind put recreation into their lives. Everyone—educators, family, friends—should tout the benefits of recreational activities.

Start with the Individual

What Is He or She Interested In?

- What types of recreation has he or she participated in previously?
- What are this person's favorite activities?
- With whom does he or she prefer to spend leisure time?
- At what time of day is recreation most enjoyable for this person?

People who are deaf-blind are as diverse in their interests as everyone else. Check the list below for some ideas. Remember, this list is only a start.

Fitness Activities

aerobics	running
swimming	cross-country skiing
walking	weight lifting
track and field	gymnastics
wrestling	bicycling (stationary/tandem)

Outdoor Activities

fishing	camping
hiking	canoeing
kayaking	horseback riding
sledding	rowing

Home Activities

cooking	gardening
needlepoint	knitting
arts and crafts	listening to music

Table Games

card games	bingo
dominoes	board games (chess, checkers, etc.)

Community Activities

bowling	ice skating
roller skating	dances (folk/social)
martial arts	diving

Sports

Special Olympics	community leagues
goal ball (persons with hearing)	school sports

Remember to work with clubs and organizations for those who are deaf to encourage individuals who are deaf-blind to participate in social activities to reduce isolation (Kappen, 1992).

Recreation Is More Than Mere Fun!

Look What It Can Do

It gives us and others information about who we are (Haggard & Williams, 1992).

It can take the place of inappropriate or self-stimulatory behavior (Honig, 1990).

It can reduce physical, social, and psychological isolation (Sauerburger, 1993).

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What Activities Are Age Appropriate?

Age-appropriate activities are those activities normally found in the individual's culture and geographic location that are geared to the individual's chronological age.

Observe other people of the same chronological age to determine what activities are appropriate. Some examples of age-appropriate activities enjoyed by teenagers in our culture are bowling, dancing, swimming, and video games. Activities which are not appropriate for this age are duck-duck-goose, riding children's tricycles, or interacting with preschool toys. Many children who are deaf-blind will choose an inappropriate activity. Our goal is to broaden their experience and move them on to choices that are appropriate.

As you research what is available in the community, be sure the activities you suggest are available for the age of the person you are helping.

What Is Safe?

If the individual is engaging in a new fitness program, the physician should be informed. If there is a heart condition, a potential for retinal detachment, tubes in the ears, or a shunt, the physician will then inform the staff or parents of any cautions that must be taken. But remember, almost any activity can be adapted for individual needs.

What Is Available?

Find out what recreational activities are available at the person's home and school. Consult with the following groups to see what is available in the community.

- YMCAs/YWCAs
- church leagues/synagogue leagues
- community leagues
- university- or college-affiliated programs
- local deaf clubs
- local associations for the blind
- Ski for Light

Research the Communication Patterns

It is important to determine each person's communication patterns and needs. For example, he or she may use augmentative communication devices such as schedule boxes and communication boards that use symbols, pictures, objects, and/or words. Since each person will have developed unique ways of using these, you will benefit from all the information you can gather. This can be as easy as looking in the files or getting the information from previous teachers, residential personnel, parents, siblings, or peers.

You'll soon find that each person is unique. For example, a person with residual hearing may only require that you get his or her attention before speaking. The person with usable vision may wish to communicate using signs. If this is the case, you will need to know which mode of signing—Signing Exact English, Pidgin Sign, American Sign Language, or Cued Speech—he or she uses. Some people may require tactile signing into the palm of the hand. For more information about various modes of communication that can be used with persons who are deaf-blind, take a look at D. Sauerburger's book, listed in the references.

Develop a Plan

Once the above steps have been taken, you can develop a recreation plan. This plan should include short- and long-term objectives that have been developed, if possible, by a team consisting of the individual, the family, and the staff. Remember that the overall goal is to find an activity that will be fun and will provide relaxation. Be sure to set the stage for successful recreation.

Maintain Interest

Establish a Time Period

Establish a period of time that is appropriate for trying out a new activity. At the end of the period, let each person evaluate the pleasure derived from the activity. He or she can then decide whether or not to continue. Use of a time period helps prevent feelings of failure; it also ensures that enough time is given to the activity to provide adequate information for making a good decision. For example: 17-year-old Robert chooses Tae Kwon Do in the community club. The parents suggest a 6-week session to determine if he enjoys the activity. At the end of the 6 weeks, Robert may choose to continue, or he may end the session and choose another activity.

Select the Proper Time of Day for the Activity

Try to schedule the recreational activity for the time it is most needed to meet individual needs. For example: Amy is a 14-year-old who is in an educational setting. She is faster than her peers at getting dressed in the morning. As a result, Amy has 20-25 minutes every morning when she has nothing planned, and there are not enough staff to direct her play or an activity. She used to engage in self-abuse and became intensely agitated. When the recreation specialist noted that Amy loves to

ride the stationary bike, the bike was made easily accessible to her. Now, every morning, Amy gets on the bike and rides for 20-25 minutes. She does not become agitated, and her self-abusive behavior has disappeared.

Modify the Activity When Necessary

Most recreational activities were developed with hearing and sighted people in mind. In many cases, an adaptation that is relatively minor can make these activities enjoyable and safe for those who are deaf-blind. For example, the children in Shannon's Girl Scout troop go roller skating every week. Shannon, like many young individuals who are deaf-blind, has difficulty keeping her balance. By using a skate aid device Shannon can safely participate in roller skating.

Ask each person if he or she prefers the help of a guide or assistance from peers. However, be aware that some persons may prefer activities that promote personal independence.

Discover the Best Ways to Teach

The following teaching strategies will help each individual succeed and make the learning process more effective.

Orient the Individual to the Playing Area

Give each person the opportunity to explore and become familiar with the equipment involved, other persons in the room, and the physical site. The absence of reliable visual and auditory input makes this a time-consuming process, but it is essential (McInnes & Treffry, 1993).

Explain

Select language (oral, sign, or augmentative systems) appropriate to the pupil's functioning level and communicate the key points of the skill.

Demonstrate

This is a practical teaching strategy only for persons with usable vision (Lieberman & Cowart, in press).

Use Brailling or Feeling and Imitation

Fait (1978) defines brailling as an inspection of people or objects with the hands. Brailling has also been referred to as "seeing" (Reams, 1980), or "tactile exploration" (Vodola, 1973). The individual who is deaf-blind feels the instructor execute the skill or activity being taught. The skill must be carefully analyzed by the demonstrator prior to the instruction in order for the demonstration to be effective.

Use Physical Guidance/Hand Over Hand

Place the student's body and/or limb(s) into the appropriate position and help him or her perform the desired movements at the preferred speed (Lieberman & Coward, in press). Physical guidance can range from total physical assistance to a gentle touch that prompts him or her to complete a task.

Enable Choice Making

Many people who are deaf-blind go through their days with someone else making decisions for them. When they get involved in recreational activities, they must use choice-making skills. Begin with simple choices. First, offer two activities and allow him or her to choose the order in which they will be done. Next, give a choice of two or three activities and let him or her choose which one to perform. As each person increases in ability to make choices, remove prompting and allow more independence in decision making.

Use Additional Strategies

- Begin with the amount of assistance that will ensure desired performance and success.
- Combine teaching techniques to ensure the individual is learning as much as possible. For example, Eddie is 16 and learning the game of T-ball. He is deaf and has some residual vision. When standing at bat in the game, Eddie needs to be reminded of which way to stand and when to bat the ball. The instructor models which way to stand, signs "hit the ball," and taps Eddie on the elbow. Eddie then bats the ball off the T. In this case, both explanation and physical guidance techniques are used.
- Be aware of the individual's responses. Try to minimize assistance as soon as you feel the individual is learning the skill in the appropriate manner.
- Provide immediate and accurate feedback so that he or she can make necessary adjustments before the next attempt (McInnes & Treffry, 1993).
- Allow each person to practice the skill in an environment that is as normal as possible. This will allow the transfer of skills to occur much more easily.
- Be patient. Progress may be slow due to learning the new skill as well as learning new terminology to go with it.
- Decrease physical cues to cues that are natural or typical to initiate desired performance. For example, in a dance unit, start with hand-over-hand assistance (unless he or she has enough ability to start with a less intrusive

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cue) and work toward a touch cue to initiate desired movement.

- Be sure hearing aids and glasses are on and functioning (unless, of course, you are in the pool).
- Be sure to select leisure activities that are chronologically age appropriate and also are utilized by the general population (Hamre-Nietupski, Nietupski, Sandvig, Sandvig, & Ayres, 1984).
- Consider featuring individuals who are deaf-blind who have special recreational talents on local news shows to raise public awareness (Kappen, 1992).

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Fait, H. (1978). Special physical education. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders.

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Additional Resources

California Deaf-Blind Services (1992). Ideas for recreation and leisure activities: Fact sheet. Sacramento: California Department of Education.

Goetz,L., Guess, D., & Stremel-Campbell, K. (Eds.). (1987). Innovative program design for individuals with dual sensory impairments. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brooks.

Nesbitt, J. A. (1975). Play recreation and leisure for people who are deaf/blind. Iowa City: University of Iowa, National Institute on Program Development and Training in Recreation for Deaf/Blind Children, Youth and Adults.

Special Olympics Motor Activities Program (1990, April/May). Motor activities and sports skills: Age appropriate, functional, and fun. Exceptional Parent, 50–52.

Gee, K. (1988). Carronbank school - aerobics are fun! Deaf-Blind Education, July-December 1988, (p.12)

Describes aerobics as a recreational activity for students in Australia who are deaf-blind.

Middleton, C., & Sorkin, S. (1990). Dance, dance, whoever you may be. Talking sense, Spring 1990, (pp. 18-19).

Describes the benefits of dance and movement education for students who are deaf-blind. Explains how students can be given the opportunity to communicate with others through body movement, however limited that movement may be, through the use of techniques such as contact improvisation and "mirroring".

McNulty, K., Mascia, J., Rocchio, L., & Rothstein, R. (1995). Developing leisure and recreation opportunities. In Everson, J. (Ed.), Supporting young adults who are deaf-blind in their communities : transition planning guide for service providers, families, and friends. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

This chapter provides a comprehensive view of recreation and leisure activities. Beginning with a theoretical overview of the value of recreation, the piece then moves to the specifics of guidelines for programming, instructional strategies, profiles and case studies.

Trenbeth, N. (1987). Developing recreation/leisure opportunities in community settings for adults of all ages who are deaf-blind. In S. Barrett, T. Carr, & A. Covert (Eds.) Community-Based Living Options for Young Adults with Deaf-Blindness: Philosophy, Directions, and Strategies.

Offers a rationale and suggestions for developing specific leisure experiences and describes a successful, larger community recreation program in Seattle for adults of all ages who are deaf-blind.

Rocchio, L., & Everson, J. (1992). Enhancing recreational participation. HKNC-TAC news, vol. 6, no. 1, Winter-Spring 1991-92 (pp. 5-7).

This article discusses the appropriate training and support to be provided for individuals who are deaf-blind and the community for enhancing recreational participation. It also describes modifications and adaptations for participation and competence in a variety of recreational activities.

Functional activities and partial participation. Mississippi Services for Deaf-Blind Project. 1993. Focus flyer (pp. 1-3).

This article defines functional activities and partial participation and then suggests ways parents and teachers can encourage at least partial participation by dual sensory impaired children in functional activities. Emphasizes the importance of participation in activities that develop the child's independence and confidence.

Horticulture for the deaf-blind. Horticulture program, Perkins School for the Blind. (1993).

This handbook shares with parents and other professionals, the lessons learned in 14 years of horticultural therapy that has been part of the curriculum at Perkins. Includes descriptions and drawings of adaptations that aid physically disabled people to enjoy gardening.

Gavin, T. (1994) Leisure options in community settings for deaf-blind people. III European conference of the international association for the education of deafblind people. Potsdam, Germany.

Offers suggestions to service providers on how to ascertain the deaf-blind person's interests, likes/dislikes, fears, etc., so that appropriate leisure activities can be developed. Gavin encourages providers to offer integrated leisure activities that expand upon the deaf-blind person's skills and interests.

Lieberman, L. (1993). Project S.I.M.P.L.E.: activities for individuals with sensory impairments and multihandicaps. In S. Grosse & D. Thompson (Eds.) Play and recreation for individuals with disabilities: practical pointers. Reston, VA, AAHPERD.

This article presents games and activities developed for students who are deaf, blind, deaf/blind, deaf/multihandicapped and blind/multihandicapped. Games and activities are arranged in a developmental sequence, beginning with locomotor skills and ending with fitness and recreation.

Enos, J. (1992). Strategies to promote community-integrated recreation: guidelines for leisure coaches. HKNC-TAC news, vol.6, no. 1, Winter-Spring 1991-92, (pp. 2-3.)

Description of seven steps for promoting use of community resources by the deaf-blind.

Krivosic, R. (1994). Swimming for multi-sensory impaired people. Talking sense, vol. 40, no. 2, Summer 1994, (pp. 18-22).

This article describes the program developed at Sense Midlands for using a pool to develop basic fundamentals of movement while providing a warm, relaxed, and nurturing environment. Topics include methods of support, boundaries, and developing water confidence.

Mamer, L. (1991) Toys and manipulative materials to enhance sensory awareness in the deaf-blind. Canadian Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association. Proceedings of the third Canadian conference on deaf-blindness, Winnipeg, Canada, 1990.

The right equipment and appropriate toys can enhance concept learning, and help develop residual vision, hearing and tactile ability in children who are deaf-blind. The article offers suggestions on how to select toys and discusses which characteristics are important.

Hammond, M. (1994). Toys for every child. Exceptional parent, Oct 1994 (pp. 36-39, 49).

This article discusses the needs children with disabilities for toys that help them develop cognitive, motor, and social skills. It describes commercially available products and adaptations as well as suggestions for home modifications. It also lists the characteristics of good toys and tells how to order a guide to toys for children who are visually impaired. A side-bar describes the battery interrupter for operating battery powered toys with a switch. A list of toy lending libraries, including addresses and phone number is appended.

Oppenheim, J., & Oppenheim, S. (1994). Using ordinary toys for kids with special need Exceptional parent, Oct 1994 (pp. 42-45).

This article describes and pictures 15 toys most of which are readily available at, or can be ordered through, local toy stores.

Lauren Lieberman is currently an assistant professor in the physical education department at the State University of New York College at Brockport, Brockport, N.Y. She teaches adapted physical education, undergraduate and graduate classes, and specializes in physical activity for individuals who are sensory impaired. She runs a sports (*Camp Abilities*) for children who are blind and deaf-blind

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National Organizations

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
1900 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 476-3400 Fax: (703) 476-9527
Info@aahperd.org http://www.aahperd.org

Students, educators in physical education, dance, health and recreation. Houses the Adapted Physical Activity Council. Operates Information and Resource Utilization Center devoted to physical education and recreation for the handicapped.

USA Deaf Sports Federation
(formerly American Athletic Association for the Deaf)
3607 Washington Blvd., Suite 4
Ogden, UT 84403-1737
(801) 393-7916 Fax: (801) 393-2263
deafsports@juno.com www.usadsf.org

Fosters athletic competition among the deaf and regulates uniform rules governing such competition. Regional, state and local groups.

Blind Outdoor Leisure Development
533 E. Main St.
Aspen, CO 81611
(970) 925-9511

Assists blind persons in participating in outdoor recreation. Aids in the establishment of local recreation clubs. Designs and conducts training courses.

Disabled Sports USA
451 Hungerford Dr., Ste. 100
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 217-0960 Fax: (301) 217-0968
TDD: (301) 217-0963
information@dsusa.org

Promotes sports and recreation opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities. Provides direct services to people with mobility impairments, including those with visual impairments, head injuries, cerebral palsy, birth defects, and neuromuscular disabilities.

National Lekotek Center
2100 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201
(800) 366-7529 Fax: (847) 328-5514
lekotek@lekotek.org www.lekotek.org

Offers a family centered approach to play. Children with special needs—along with their parents, siblings, grandparents, neighborhood friends—attend monthly play sessions. Has more than 50 affiliate play centers across the U.S. Trains Lekotek leaders to facilitate play groups.

Special Recreation, Inc.
362 Koser Ave.
Iowa City, IA 52246-3038
(319) 337-7578 johnnesbitt@uiowa.edu

Organization for consumers with disabilities, their parents, rehabilitation professionals and volunteers. Promotes self-determination, equal opportunity, consumerism, and normalization in recreation and leisure for individuals with disabilities.

U.S. Association for Blind Athletes
33 N. Institute St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 630-0422 Fax: (719) 630-0616
usaba@usa.net www.usaba.org

Aims to develop individual independence through athletic competition.

U.S. Toy Library Association
2530 Crawford Ave. Suite 11
Evanston, IL 60201-4954
(847) 864-3330 Fax: (847) 864-3331
usatla@aol.com
www.sjdccd.cc.ca.us/toylibrary

National network of nearly 400 toy lending libraries serving children with and without disabilities. Seeks to broaden understanding of how toys can educate and aid in development and therapy of children with disabilities. Families may borrow both commercially available and adapted toys.

World Recreation Association of the Deaf, Inc./USA
P.O. Box 92074
Rochester, NY 14692-0074
TTY: (716) 586-4208 Fax: (716) 475-7101
WRADINTL@aol.com www.wrad.org

Established to foster the development of innovation in recreational and cultural activities for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

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